

Haiti Cemetery

205 Martin's Lane

Rockville, MD

0.68 acres

Nominated by Peerless Rockville

Survey-No. M: 26/16/5

History by Eileen McGuckian, description by Mary Fitch. June, 1986.

Owner: Heirs of Frances M. Crutchfield and Henry W. Crutchfield represented by Warren Crutchfield

SUMMARY:

Haiti Cemetery was the earliest burying ground for black residents in Rockville. It was first used in the late 19th century for members of families who lived in the Martin's Lane area. The three-quarter acre site contains approximately 30 grave markers, the earliest dating from 1889 and the most recent from 1983. Depressions in the ground indicate that many others are present and unmarked. It remains under private ownership.



Description

The Haiti Cemetery is located at the far northern end of a long, narrow lot on the north side of Martin's Lane. The cemetery itself occupies approximately three-quarters of an acre and is hidden from view on the south and west by dense foliage. The cemetery is bounded by a wire fence on the west, north and east sides.



The cemetery contains approximately 30 grave markers, the earliest dating from 1889. Most graves are marked with stones of granite or poured concrete with carved inscriptions, although one dated 1910 appears hand lettered in concrete. Several of the newer graves from 1982 and 1983 have small metal grave markers provided by the Snowden Funeral Home. Ranks of regular depressions in the earth suggest that there are many unmarked graves as well.

All graves orient to the east. While there is no clear pattern to the layout of the gravesites, most of the older graves are in the north and the later graves to the south.

The cemetery contains four wrought-iron-fenced family plots overgrown with shrubs and vines. These plots have grave markers in various states of repair. Some stones are tipped over or have sunk into the ground, and urns for flowers have been overturned and broken.



Significance

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History and Support

Tradition tells that the Haiti Cemetery was started in the quarter of the 19th century when an heir of Samuel Martin sold sites to members of local black churches on an unused portion garden behind her house.¹

Martin's Lane was the dividing line between Margaret Beall's property to the south and Samuel Martin's to the north. Miss Beall, who lived in the Beall-Dawson House on West Montgomery Avenue, sold land (often with existing houses) to several former slaves; members of these families continued to work for Beall and Dawson heirs well into the 20th century.



¹ William Wood, "Haiti Cemetery Holds City's Past." Montgomery County Sentinel, February 15, 1979.

Samuel Martin was born a slave to the Nichols family near Rockville about 1800. When he died in 1873, he left considerable fortune and property, as well as the respect of those who knew him.² His children divided up the farm north of Martin's Lane, constructing homes as each generation necessitated.

In the division of her grandfather's estate, Charlotte Penny received the westernmost lot on "the lane leading from the Frederick Road to the farm of John T. Vinson," (now Martin's Lane), identified in his 1873 will as Lot No. 1 on Plat No. 1. Martin had divided this 8-3/4 acre portion of his property into five lots of 1 3/4 acres each.³ Charlotte Penny, "of Washington City in the District of Columbia," took title to her portion in August 1883.⁴

Following land exchanges with her brother, Thomas P. Martin, Charlotte Penny sold the unimproved parcel four years later to her sister, Agatha P. Smith.⁵ The Smiths probably constructed a home on this property soon after, for they mortgaged it in 1890 in order to secure a \$500 loan; the loan was made by the Home Mutual Building Association of Montgomery County to the Trustees "who want to erect a new house of divine worship ... for use and occupation of the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church of Rockville."⁶ The release was recorded in 1894.

The Smiths may have begun making their land available to local families for burials in the early 1880's for the earliest readable stone, that of Charlotte Penny, is dated 1889. Two sales of burial lots were recorded in the early 20th century; Eliza and George Patterson purchased "150 square feet, more or less, being a burial lot in the private cemetery of Smith and wife" in 1906. Eliza Douglas bought 110 square feet in 1908, "and the same lot wherein the late Liz Douglas is now buried, including one more foot of land in the Walk Way the length of the said lot facing thereon. And the said Agatha Smith covenants to warrant generally the land herein conveyed."⁷

The Haiti area of Rockville also became a focus for black families who worked in Washington, D.C., often for the government. They resided in the city close to their places of employment, coming to Rockville for summers and weekends. Other Haiti residents lived on Martin's Lane year round.

Haiti Cemetery remained in the same ownership as the westernmost house on the north side of Martin's Lane. Burials slowed down considerably after 1917, when the Order of Galilean Fishermen purchased land in Lincoln Park for use as a cemetery.

U. Grant Smith owned the property for many years. The last resident of the house was Mrs. Frances "Lottie" Johnson Crutchfield. The Crutchfield house was torn down in the early 1970s, but the family still maintains the cemetery. The last burial was 1983.

Almost all of the individuals buried at Haiti Cemetery are related to one another, and many of the families now living on Martin's Lane are direct descendants of the people who first settled there in the 19th century. The cemetery is still in use as a family burial grounds in 2001.

See attachments 8.2, 8.3 for list of stones and burials.

² Montgomery County Will Records, Inventory RWC7/122 (1873) and obituaries.

³ Montgomery County Judgment Records, EBP 14/120 (1873-1883).

⁴ Montgomery County Land Records EBP29/252 (1883).

⁵ Ibid., JA6/150 (1887).

⁶ Ibid., JA20/393 and JA20/395 (1890).

⁷ Ibid. 192/105 (1906) and 198/102 (1908).

Haiti Cemetery Attachment 8.2

LIST OF STONES IN HAITI CEMETERY (1972 / 1986) by Eileen McGuckian

Cora M. Hodge (d. 1927)
Alonzo Hodge (d. 1922)
Sadie J. Ball (1878 - 1919)
Margaret A., wife of Samuel Mason (March 24, 1870 - Nov. 24, 1912)
Edward Wood (Sept. 14 1872 - April 15@ 1956)
Cora J. Wood (May 12, 1873 - Dec. 20, 1939)
Horace Sedgwick (1859 - 1927)
Emma Sedgwick (1863 - 1932)
Lucy Book (d. 1937)
Virginia Broadnick (1896 - 19--)
Rachel Emma Carroll (b. 1884 d.1979, age 95) (Funeral Home Marker)
Nicholas W. Robinson (March 1, 1858 - Oct. 18p 1932)
Janie Martin (b. 8-5-97, d. 2-4-83) (Funeral Home Marker)
George Wesley Meads, Sr. (d. Sept. 1919)
Rosa Rozier Meads (d. Jan. 1902)
George Wesley Meads, Jr. (d. Aug. 1910)
Charlotte L. Penny (b. Feb. 19, 1839, d. Dec. 10, 1889)
Catherine M. Martin (d. Oct. 17, ---2)
Otho Martin (d. Nov. 27, 1893)
Annie E. Robinson (Jan. 11, 1863 - Feb. 22, 1922)
Chalott Johnson (June 3, 1845 - Jan. 29, 1918)
Derrick Eugene Martin (d. May 16, 1970, age 4 yrs. 28 days) (Funeral Home Marker)
Herman Offutt (b. Nov. 26, 1902, d. May 10, 1935)
Maggie Johnson (b. Feb. 8, 1860, d. Sept. 18, 1911)
Wm. H. Johnson ("1845, his wife")
Charles Douglass (b. 1845)
Adam J. Powell (d. May 14, 1898)
Martin Broadnic (d. Feb. 18, 1910)
Mary F. Magee, wife of H. Magee (d. June 16, 1913)
Initialed stones:
C. E. P.
E. D.
C. D.
N. 9. Sept.1 Webster

PERSONS BURIED IN HAITI CEMETERY AS REMEMBERED BY WILLIAM WOOD, 1979

his father and mother (Edward & Cora J. Wood, Lived on N. Washington St.)

his grandfather (no name given, also lived on N. Washington St.)

his grandmother Charlotte Johnson

Willie & Henson Johnson

John and Molly Baker

Annie & Charles & daughter Sarah

Martin Broadnic

Adam J. Powell

George Meads (deputy sheriff, 1897 fire chief)

George W. Johnson (Mr. T., Restaurateur)

Nathan Webster

Willie Offutt

Lottie & Richard Crutchfield & children

Walter McElroy

Lucy & George Book

Otho Tyler

Liza and Charles Douglas and daughter Lizzie

HENRY CRUTCHFIELD REMEMBERS THE FOLLOWING BURIALS:

Sam Mason

Dennis and Grant Smith

Carroll Family

Bibliography:

Interview with Henry Crutchfield, June 1986. William Wood, "Black Cemetery Holds City's Past", Montgomery County Sentinel, February 15, 1979. Interview with William Wood, 1972. Peerless Rockville files.

Haiti Cemetery Site Location

